

LIFE GROUP SERMON SUMMARY QUESTIONS

Advent Series 2018

These questions are for the **December 9, 2018** sermon, "The Immanuel of Christmas." Please read the sermon passages (Isaiah 7:1-8:10; Matthew 1:18-25) together out loud.

Sermon Outline

IN THREATENING TIMES, STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH, TRUSTING IN . . .

1. God's promise, which he has made to us (Isaiah 7:1-25)
 - a. Ahaz did not trust the LORD.
 - i. He made an alliance with Assyria, who were enemies of God.
 - ii. He inspected his own resources (water) and did not think he could make it.
 - iii. When the LORD offered to provide a sign, Ahaz refused.
 1. Principle: Do not make rash decisions in your threatening moments.
 2. Principle: Do not become dependent upon those opposed to God.
 - b. God himself would decide upon and send a sign: "the virgin shall conceive."
2. God's presence, which he has established with us (Isaiah 8:1-10)
 - a. God himself is among us, "Immanuel."
 - b. There is great comfort, certain victory when the one in charge of all things is present.
3. God's provision, which he has given to us (Matthew 1:18-25)
 - a. God provides the Messiah, Jesus, born of the Virgin. He is, "Immanuel, God with us."
 - b. Note the contrast between Ahaz and Joseph:
 - i. Both were afraid (Ahaz fled to Assyria for help; Joseph wanted to flee)
 - ii. Both lacked resources (both wondered how they could keep going)
 - iii. Ahaz did not trust "God with us," but Joseph did trust "God with us."

Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Based on #1, above: We often think of trust as if it is an option to consider: "Trust?" But trusting God is our only option: "Trust." What kinds of foolishness and sin is avoided when we see trusting God as our only option?
2. Based on #1, above: Ahaz may have convinced himself that he was being wise and shrewd in making an alliance with Assyria. His assumption was that Israel could only be protected through military might, so he did what he thought was necessary to provide safety for his people. It didn't work out militarily or spiritually. Have you ever convinced yourself to take a certain course of action, only to realize later that your action was completely opposed to God?
3. Based on #2, above: One of the wonders of Christmas is that God, descending from heaven, takes up residence among us, "Immanuel." Talk about the comfort, confidence and hope that flows from your faith that God is with us.
4. Based on #3, above: Be honest: how do you handle fear? How did you respond the last time you were out of control and lacking resources? How does Joseph's response to God instruct you? Does God have the resources to bring you through this threatening time? Discuss.